

## Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 208700

EXDIS

FOLLOWING TEL SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO BANGKOK, PARIS,  
HONG KONG, GENEVA FROM VIENTIANE AUG 20:

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 5303

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, UNHCR, VS, US, FR

SUBJECT: AMCITS IN SVN AND REPATRIATION OF VIETNAMESE

SUMMARY. UNHCR HANOI REPRESENTATIVE TOLD EMBASSY AUGUST  
19 HE HAD WHAT HE CONSIDERS RELIABLE INFORMATION THAT  
AMERICANS CAPTURED IN BAN ME THOUT MID-MARCH HAVE BEEN  
OR SOON WILL BE MOVED TO SAIGON AND THAT THERE IS IN  
PRINCIPLE NO RPT NO OBSTACLE TO THEIR LEAVING SVN. HE  
ALSO SAID HE HAD OBTAINED DRV FOREIGN MINISTRY CONFIR-  
MATION THAT, DESPITE RECENT STATEMENT BY DO XUAN OANH  
IN JAPAN, IT WANTS UNHCR TO CONTINUE WORK OF TRANSPORTING  
GOODS AND PASSENGERS. HE REQUESTED USG REACTION TO  
IDEA OF HIS PROPOSING TO DRV/PRG EARLY RETURN OF 13  
"DRUGGED" VIETNAMESE AS A GROUP, IN HOPE OF SPEEDING  
UP REPATRIATION IN GENERAL. UNHCR REPS INTEND CONCEN-  
TRATE NEXT FEW DAYS ON ORGANIZING SAIGON-HONG KONG  
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FLIGHTS, WHILE FRENCH CONTINUE SEPARATE SAIGON-BANGKOK  
AIRLIFT (WHICH HAS CAUSED UNHCR SOME AGGRAVATION).  
END SUMMARY.

1. UNHCR SAIGON REPRESENTATIVE-DESIGNATE ALEXANDRE CASELLA AND HANOI REPRESENTATIVE DARRYL NYUN HAN MET SEPARATELY WITH POL COUNSELOR AUGUST 19. THE TWO HAD MADE SAIGON FLIGHT TOGETHER PREVIOUS DAY AND WERE TO LEAVE VIENTIANE AUGUST 20 FOR HANOI, CASELLA FOR A FEW DAYS TO COORDINATE SAIGON-HONG KONG FLIGHTS AND HAN FOR LONGER STAY WHICH IS TO INCLUDE ROAD TRIP TO HUE AND DA NANG WITH TWO UNICEF REPS STATIONED HANOI AND RETURN THERE IN TIME FOR DRV NATIONAL DAY OBSERVANCES CULMINATING SEPTEMBER 2.

2. MORE SIGNIFICANT INFORMATION CAME FROM HAN. HE SAID THAT IN COURSE OF CONVERSATION WITH LOW-LEVEL SOURCE WHO NEVERTHELESS HAS GOOD ACCESS TO HIGHER-LEVEL DELIBERATIONS AND WHOM HE HAS FOUND TO BE RELIABLE (INTERPRETER FOR PRG REPRESENTATION IN HANOI), SOURCE SAID IT WAS PRG POLICY TO PERMIT ALL FOREIGNERS WHO WISH TO LEAVE VIET NAM TO DO SO, AND THROUGH SAIGON. SOURCE LATER CONFIRMED SPECIFICALLY THAT THIS WOULD APPLY TO "MISSIONARIES CAPTURED AT BAN ME THUOT", AND HAN GAINED IMPRESSION BAN ME THUOT GROUP WOULD BE MOVED TO SAIGON SHORTLY IF NOT MOVED ALREADY. HAN ADDED AS PERSONAL OPINION THAT HE FORESAW NO RPT NO DIFFICULTY OVER EVENTUAL DEPARTURE OF SCARBOROUGH, MILLER FAMILY AND OTHERS FROM BAN ME THUOT NOT RPT NOT CONNECTED WITH USG BUT THOUGHT PRG MIGHT RPT MIGHT TRY TO POSE SOME CONDITIONS WHEN IT CAME TO USAID OFFICER PAUL STRUHARIK.

3. HAN DID NOT RPT NOT BROAD CASE OF JAMES F. LEWIS OF CONSULATE NHA TRANG IN CONVERSATION WITH INTERPRETER BUT EXPECTS OPPORTUNITY TO DO SO WITH PRG OFFICIALS DURING LENGTHY CAR TRIP NEXT WEEK. HE TOOK WITH HIM LIST OF 67 AMCITS KNOWN/BELIEVED TO BE IN SVN, COMPILED HERE ON BASIS HONG KONG 9468, STATE 188924 AND PREVIOUS, WITH CAVEAT THAT AT LEAST THREE AMCITS WHOSE NAMES WE HAVE NOT RECEIVED REPORTEDLY CAME OUT OF SAIGON ON FRENCH AIRLIFT WEEK OF AUGUST 11. POL  
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COUNSELOR ALSO CITED POINT THAT THE REV. JOHN W. TABOR AND ALEXANDER J. KNOWLES WERE LAST HEARD OF IN DA NANG (STATE 180112) AND SUGGESTED HAN TRY TO DETERMINE THEIR WHEREABOUTS WHEN IN DA NANG HIMSELF. (HAN CONFIRMED IN PASSING THAT DR. TOM HOSKINS, AFSC, HAD LEFT DA NANG FOR SAIGON.) COMMENT: INFO IN THIS AND PRECEDING PARAGRAPH MUST RPT MUST BE STRICTLY PROTECTED. HAN HAS NOT RPT NOT CONFIDED PARA 2 INFO EVEN TO HIS UNHCR TEAM-MATE CASELLA, AND HE HAS ASKED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS THAT FACT OF HIS INQUIRIES ON OUR BEHALF BE CONFINED TO USG OFFICIALS.

4. HAN ALSO SAID THAT, ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM GENEVA,

HE MADE IMMEDIATE INQUIRY TO DRV FOREIGN MINISTRY ABOUT REMARKS REPORTEDLY MADE IN JAPAN CIRCA AUGUST 6 BY DRV OFFICIAL DO XUAN OANH, WHO LED DRV DELEGATION TO A-BOMB ANNIVERSARY CEREMONIES, TO EFFECT THAT USG WOULD HAVE TO DEAL DIRECTLY WITH DRV/PRG ON REPATRIATION OF VIETNAMESE AND THAT UNHCR COULD NOT SERVE AS INTER-MEDIARY. (WE CANNOT LOCATE HERE OANH'S TEXT OR ANY AUTHORITATIVE ACCOUNT OF HIS REMARKS.) DRV FOREIGN MINISTRY REP TOLD HAN THAT, WHILE OANH'S REMARKS WERE NOT RPT NOT UNOFFICIAL, DRV/PRG WERE IN FACT SATISFIED WITH UNHCR'S CURRENT ROLE IN FLYING SUPPLIES INTO HANOI AND SAIGON AND FLYING PASSENGERS OUT OF LATTER AND TRUSTED UNHCR WOULD CONTINUE (WHICH OF COURSE IT INTENDS TO DO). AT NO RPT NO TIME, HOWEVER, HAS HAN BEEN ABLE TO GET INDICATION WHEN DRV/VPRG MIGHT PERMIT UNHCR TO BEGIN FLYING REPATRIATES BACK TO SAIGON IN SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS, AND BOTH HE AND CASELLA ARE CONVINCED DRV/PRG WILL CONTINUE CASE-BY-CASE EXAMINATION OF DOSSIERS. HAN CONCLUDED THAT OANH'S REMARKS REPRESENTED FURTHER DRV/PRG AND OTHER SUBJECTS BUT DID NOT RPT NOT REPRESENT ANY CHANGE IN ATTITUDE TOWARD UNHCR EFFORTS PER SE.

5. CASELLA EARLIER GAVE SAME INTERPRETATION AND ADDED TYPICAL PERSONAL TWIST: SINCE UNHCR HAS NEVER SERVED AS INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS BUT INSTEAD REPRESENTS ALL UN MEMBER-GOVERNMENTS, THAT PORTION OF OANH'S STATEMENT WAS IRRELEVANT.

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6. BOTH HAN AND CASELLA FOCUSSED ON CASE OF 13 VIETNAMESE ALLEGEDLY DRUGGED AT UTAPAO WHEN THEY REFUSED TO BE FLOWN TO GUAM AND COULD NOT STAY IN THAILAND. UNHCR REPS BELIEVE THIS CASE CUTS BOTH WAYS FOR DRV/PRG; WHILE IT GIVES VIETNAMESE GOOD PROPAGANDA THEME, IT ALSO UNDERCUTS THEIR ARGUMENTS THAT WOULD-BE REPATRIATES ON GUAM AND ELSEWHERE ARE INSINCERE OR SUSPECT. CASELLA NOTED THAT PRG WAS IN FACT QUITE PROUD OF ITSELF FOR HAVING ACCEPTED REPATRIATION OF 13 AMPUTEE CHILDREN FROM VIENTIANE ON AUGUST 1 (VIENTIANE 5126) AND DISAPPOINTED THAT THIS ACTION DID NOT RECEIVE WORLD-WIDE ATTENTION (APPARENTLY GOT ONLY A SHORT SQUIB IN LE MONDE).

7. FURTHER DISCUSSION THIS SUBJECT WITH HAN PROMPTED HIM TO CONSIDER IDEA OF PROPOSING TO DRV/PRG RETURN OF THE 13 "DRUGGED" VIETNAMESE FROM GUAM. HE SAID HE WOULD CABLE GENEVA AUGUST 20 FOR AUTHORITY TO MAKE SUCH A PROPOSAL. HE WAS ALSO MOST INTERESTED IN USG REACTION AND WONDERED WHETHER THE OTHER 50 OR SO VIETNAMESE WHO WERE PERSUADED, SHORT OF DRUGGING, TO TAKE SAME FLIGHT STILL WANTED TO RETURN TO SVN AND IF SO WHETHER THEY COULD BE REASSEMBLED WITH THE 13 AS A DISCRETE GROUP.

JKIN EFFECT, HE SEES THAT PARTICULAR GROUP AS POSSIBLE MEANS OF GETTING DRV/PRG TO START ACCEPTING REPATRIATES OTHER THAN ON CASE-BY-CASE BASIS.)

8. NEITHER CASELLA NOR HAN HAD ANY KNOWLEDGE OF THE THREE FORMER ARVN OFFICERS WHO SET OUT ON THEIR OWN FROM GUAM FOR BANGKOK AND VIENTIANE AUGUST 7 (CINCPACREP MARIANAS 160103Z AUG 75 AND PREVIOUS). CASELLA SPECULATED THEY MIGHT HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO ENTER LAOS WITH GVN PASSPORTS (ALTHOUGH WE HAVE HEARD NOTHING HERE OF THEIR BEING REFUSED ENTRY). CASELLA ALSO SAID IDEA OF BRINGING TWO POTENTIAL REPATRIATES FROM GUAM TO VIENTIANE APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN ABANDONED.

9. UNHCR FOCUS AT MOMENT IS ON ORGANIZATION OF FLIGHTS BETWEEN SAIGON AND HONG KONG, WHICH IT HOPES TO BEGIN AS EARLY AS WEEK OF AUGUST 25. FINAL APPROVAL STILL PENDING AT BOTH ENDS FOR VARIOUS REASONS, NOT ALL OF WHICH ARE CLEAR TO UNHCR REPS (THUS CASELLA'S TRIP TO CONFIDENTIAL

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HANOI). ONE ASPECT AT HONG KONG END IS STATUS AND TRANSIT RIGHTS OF ANY HOLDERS OF TAIWAN PASSPORTS WHO MIGHT COME OUT. ANOTHER, AFFECTING BOTH POINTS, IS COMMO BETWEEN HONG KONG AND HANOI WHICH MUST BE MORSE RATHER THAN VOICE AND MUST EMPLOY FREQUENCY ALREADY IN USE ELSEWHERE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA OR PACIFIC, WHICH RUNS RISK OF FINE OR REPRIMAND FOR HONG KONG CIV AIR AUTHORITIES BUT WILL BE DONE ANYWAY.

10. HAN HAS TOLD DRV/PRG HE WANTS TO USE HONG KONG FLIGHTS FOR WIDE MIX OF NATIONALITIES, INCLUDING SOUTH KOREANS, FILIPINOS, AND ANYONE ELSE WHO WANTS TO COME OUT. IN BACK OF UNHCR MINDS IS IDEA OF EVENTUALLY REPATRIATING VIETNAMESE FROM GUAM AND ELSEWHERE OVER SAME ROUTE. ONCE FLIGHTS BEGIN, UNHCR WILL USE ROYAL AIR LAO CARAVELLE, FLYING FIRST FROM VIENTIANE TO SAIGON AND THEN MAKING FIVE SUCCESSIVE RUNS BETWEEN SAIGON AND HONG KONG BEFORE RETURNING TO VIENTIANE. (THIS WILL TAKE CARAVELLE OUT OF SERVICE ON VIENTIANE-BANGKOK AND OTHER ROUTES, BUT RAL IS FINDING THESE INCREASINGLY UNPROFITABLE IN ANY EVENT.)

11. HAN AND PARTICULARLY CASELLA ARE SOMEWHAT BITTER TOWARD FRENCH, WHO COULD HAVE USED UNHCR AIRLIFT (AND SUPPORTED IT FINANICIALLY) IN FIRST PLACE, WHOM THEY SEE AS HAVING TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF GROUNDWORK UNHCR LAID, AND WHOM THEY SUSPECT OF HAVING TOLD PRG IN SAIGON THAT UNHCR SERVICE WAS NOW DISPENSABLE. THEY NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT FRENCH AIRLIFT HAS HAD ITS OWN FITS AND STARTS AND THAT UNHCR'S OWN FLIGHT AUGUST 18 WAS CHALLENGED BY SAIGON TOWER WHILE OVER BINH TUY PROVINCE BUT ALLOWED

TO LAND ONCE UNHCR IDENTIFY CONFIRMED. (NO PASSENGERS CAME OUT AUGUST 18, A MONDAY, BECAUSE OF NEW RULE RESULTING FROM FRENCH AIRLIFT THAT ALL PASSENGERS MUST TURN OVER BAGGAGE FOR INSPECTION 24 HOURS IN ADVANCE TO AVOID TIME-CONSUMING OPERATION AT AIRPORT. SINCE INSPECTORS DO NOT WORK SUNDAYS, THERE WILL BE NO MORE MONDAY FLIGHTS BY ANYONE.) UNHCR REPS CRITICIZED FRENCH FOR EVEN SMALL DISCOURTESIES, SUCH AS FAILING TO COVER OVER UNHCR MARKINGS ON RAL CARAVELLE WHEN FRENCH WERE USING THAT AIRCRAFT. (FRENCH NOW USE UTA CARAVELLE EXCLUSIVELY.)  
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UNHCR REPS ARE CITING NUMEROUS GROUND COORDINATION PROBLEMS IN SAIGON AS FURTHER ARGUMENT FOR PRG PERMISSION TO OPEN RESIDENT OFFICE THERE.

12. MOTIVATION FOR CARRYING OF NON-FRENCH NATIONALS ON FRENCH AIRLIFT IS UNCERTAIN. CASELLA UNDERSTANDS PRG REQUIRED THAT APPROXIMATELY TEN PERCENT OF PASSENGERS BE OTHER NATIONALS; HAN HAS HEARD THIS VERSION BUT ALSO ANOTHER (IN HANOI ONLY), THAT FRENCH VOLUNTEERED TO CARRY SMALL NUMBERS OF NON-FRENCH PAX.

13. CASELLA MENTIONED HE HAD PASSED MESSAGE TO PRG THAT DEPARTURE OF TUG SAIGON 240 FROM BANGKOK (VIENTIANE 5126 AND PREVIOUS) COULD BE INTERPRETED AS A U.S. GESTURE. HE OMITTED ANY MENTION OF THAI ROLE, EITHER OUT OF PERSONAL ANTI-THAI PREJUDICE OR BECAUSE HE THOUGHT PRG HAD ALREADY RECOGNIZED RTG GESTURE AND RECIPROCATED BY RELEASING THAI FISHING-BOAT CREWMEN (BANGKOK 15527). HE HAD NO OTHER OBSERVATIONS ON THIS SUBJECT. HAN SAID RUMOR IN NON-VIETNAMESE CIRCLES IN HANOI WAS THAT PRC HAD BEEN GRATIFIED BY U.S. VETO OF DRV AND PRG APPLICATIONS FOR UN MEMBERSHIP, BUT OF COURSE COULD NOT SAY SO.

14. ACTION REQUESTED: DEPT'S REACTION TO IDEA OF HAN'S PROPOSING IN HANOI MASS-REPATRIATION OF 13 "DRUGGED" VIETNAMESE (AND AS MANY OTHERS OF SAME ORIGINAL GROUP AS POSSIBLE). BELIEVE WE CAN COMMUNICATE REACTION TO HAN IN HANOI IN DISCREET FASHION. REACTION COULD ALSO BE PASSED BY WAY OF UNHCR HEADQUARTERS, BUT ONLY AFTER CAREFUL SOUNDING TO DETERMINE THAT HEADQUARTERS HAD APPROVED HAN'S CONCEPT.  
ORAN UNQUOTE ROBINSON

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